

# *City of Alexandria, Virginia*

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 29, 2010

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: YON LAMBERT, PRINCIPAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNER, T&ES

SUBJECT: COMPLETE STREETS

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This memorandum provides an update to Commissioners on the status of the City's "Complete Street" program.

### **What is "Complete Streets"?**

"Complete Streets" is an initiative by which cities, states, and other jurisdictions adopt a policy that future roadway projects will safely accommodate all users (pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, transit riders and drivers of motor vehicles), and people of all ages and abilities, including children, older adults, and people with disabilities.

The "Complete Streets" framework includes not only retrofitting existing streets to increase safety for all, but changing project scoping, planning procedures, and design standards so that streets are routinely designed with all users in mind from the outset.

"Complete Streets" policies may take many forms. However, the National Complete Streets Coalition has identified ten elements of a comprehensive complete streets policy:

- A "vision" statement
- Specifies that "all users" includes pedestrians, bicyclists and transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses and automobiles
- Encourages street connectivity and aims to create a comprehensive, integrated, connected network for all modes
- Is adoptable by all agencies to cover all roads
- Applies to both new and retrofit projects
- Includes clear procedures for exceptions and makes them specific
- Directs use of latest and best design standards
- Directs solutions to complement the context of the community
- Establishes performance standards with measurable outcomes
- Includes specific next steps

### **“Complete Streets” in Alexandria**

The city established a vision for “Complete Streets” in its 2008 Transportation Master Plan and in several sections of the plan, including the “Streets” section which calls for the City to formally develop and adopt a ‘Complete Streets’ policy as strategy #S2.

The Eco-City Alexandria Environmental Action Plan (Phase 1, FY2009-2011) also calls for the City to pass a resolution adopting the principles of Complete Streets and Low Impact Development in road projects wherever practicable.

“Complete Streets” is referenced prominently in the proposed update to the City Council Strategic Plan under Goal 3 (Transportation): *A multimodal transportation network that supports sustainable land use and provides internal mobility and regional connectivity for Alexandria.* Under this Goal, Objective #3 is: *Ensure safe and accessible travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and motorists on Complete Streets with design and implementation that is context sensitive.* This document is expected to be adopted by City Council in early 2010.

Recent planning documents passed by the Planning Commission and City Council include references to complete streets (or similar) and major projects such as the King-Beauregard and Eisenhower Avenue Widening project also reflect the intent.

The table below compares elements of complete streets policy with existing City policy:

<b>‘Complete Streets’ Element</b>	<b>City Reference/Policy</b>	<b>Note</b>
1. Vision	Reference 2008 Transportation Master Plan, 2010 Council Strategic Plan	Most vision statements are consistent
2. “All” Users	Reference 2008 Master Plan, Strategic Plan and numerous small area plans	All users commonly referenced
3. Connectivity	Reference ‘Street’ section of 2008 Master Plan	In 2009, Virginia passed legislation that prohibits residential subdivisions composed purely of cul-de-sacs.
4. All agencies	City operates/maintains all roads in Alexandria	VDOT typically cooperates with City staff on new ‘urban’ projects and agency approval is not required for most roadway changes
5. New and retrofit projects	Master Plan sets umbrella policy for new projects, though flexibility remains.	Maintenance projects are typically held to federal ADA guidelines only; guidance needed on future maintenance/re-striping
6. Design Exceptions	Master Plan sets umbrella policy, City has no ‘Street Design’ manual	Some proposals exist for ‘Street Design’ manual, unclear how they might differ from national & state standards
7. Latest and best design standards	Reference 2008 Master Plan and small area plans such as Potomac Yard draft	Umbrella policy exists in Master Plan, staff uses judgment in street design
8. Context Sensitive solutions	Reference 2008 Master Plan and 2010 Strategic Plan	‘Context Sensitive’ referenced specifically in 2010 Strategic Plan
9. Measurable Performance Standards	Reference 2008 Master Plan, Eco-City Action Plan and 2010 Strategic Plan	Measurable performance standards are in place
10. Specific Next Steps	Reference 2008 Master Plan, Eco-City Action Plan and 2010 Strategic Plan	Reference 2008 Master Plan, Eco-City Action Plan and 2010 Strategic Plan